

**Exiting Community of Practice  
Conference Call – January 8, 2004**

**Presenters:**

**Ellen Romett, Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN);  
Joan Kester, Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry's Office of  
Vocational Rehabilitation and the Office of Workforce Investment;  
Kerin Kohler, Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's Office of Children,  
Youth and Families and the Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.**

**Carol Daniels**, Great Lakes Area Regional Resource Center (GLARRC)

This conference call is hosted by the Exiting Community of Practice (CoP), a Community sponsored by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). Sabrina Brahms and I are co-facilitators of this Community along with our partners Donna Johnson and Chris Bremer from the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET). We are really pleased that you have joined us to hear about the Pennsylvania Transition Community of Practice. Ellen Romett of the Pennsylvania Training and Assistance Network will begin and her colleagues, Joan Kester and Kerin Kohler will join in the description of how they are working together along with families to shape the future of transition in Pennsylvania.

**Ellen Romett:** Good afternoon everybody and thanks for joining us. In Pennsylvania, we got started as a community because of the regulatory requirements from the revision to IDEA in '97. After the regulations came out in March of '99, we pulled together four of our major state agencies that all have responsibilities to provide services to children with disabilities. These folks are from the Department of Education, the Department of Public Welfare, the Department of Labor and Industry, and the Department of Health. For about six months, these folks worked and argued and held their ground and then gave a little and finally came up with something called a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Memorandum of Understanding is available for everybody to view on the PaTTAN website – [www.pattan.k12.pa.us](http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us). PaTTAN is our training and technical assistance agency in Pennsylvania that is responsible to train folks to serve kids with disabilities. Down the side of the PaTTAN web homepage, transition is listed under sections. If you go to the Transition section, the Memorandum of Understanding is there if you want to see it. The Memorandum of Understanding is a document that identifies how the services will be provided and coordinated by the various state agencies. It identifies what agency is responsible for what services and where the financial responsibility lies. It identifies a dispute resolution process and so on. But it is just a document. What is more important about it is that there were two committees that worked to develop this Memorandum of Understanding. One was a core committee – the director level and policy maker level persons who could mediate disputes related to who provides what and who pays for what services. Then there was a training group of folks whose responsibility was to go out and explain the Memorandum of Understanding - not only in words but in practice. I became part of that. Joan Kester and Kerin Kohler were part of that training group of people. We just began working together to spread the word. Before I go forward, I want you to hear

Joan's voice and Kerin's voice and let them tell you a little bit about themselves and then I'll come back to briefly describe what we did. We are going to go through how we started, what we see as advantages, what were some of the road blocks, what kind of work we've done, where we want to go, and how others might want to look at starting something like this in your own states. Joan Kester is from the Department of Labor and Industry. Kerin Kohler is from the Department of Public Welfare, Office of Children, Youth, and Families.

**Joan Kester:** Thanks for inviting us to join you. I think one of the best ways to learn is really to just to be able to talk to one another and bounce off ideas. I'm sure if we have some dialogue we'll probably be learning some things from you as well. I work as a Statewide Transition Specialist with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation that is in the Department of Labor and Industry. So, administratively we are not next to Education; we're in separate departments. I take my direction from the Executive Director of our agency – an agency that has really held transition as a very high priority. The Executive Director has given me quite a bit of authority to go about doing business to really promote positive outcomes for youth with disabilities.

**Kerin Kohler:** Hi, everyone. I'd like to also thank you for inviting us to speak today. I work in Policy Division in the Office of Communities and Families. In Pennsylvania, our child welfare system is provided under county administered systems. As a state agency, we provide guidance and provisions to counties throughout Pennsylvania.

**Ellen Romett:** As I said, the Governor said, "In order to comply with this regulation, we should come up with some formal document or policy related to how to work cooperatively to provide services." He then pulled together Education, Labor and Industry, Public Welfare, and Health. Within those departments there were representatives from the Bureau of Special Education in Education and then the Bureau of Career and Technical Education in Education. In Labor and Industry we had representation from Vocational Rehabilitation and the Bureau of Workforce Assessment. In Public Welfare we had representatives from our Office of Mental Retardation, our Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Office of Children Youth and Families, and our Office of Medical Assistance Service. Finally, in Health, we had membership from our Bureau of Family Health and our Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs. The first thing that we did as a group of people / trainers was go out to seven different places in the State and just talk about the content and meaning of the Memorandum of Understanding and what we do within each of our offices. I am going to let Joan go from there to talk about some of our guiding principles. From the very get go, from May of 2001, right after our Memorandum of Understanding was signed, we started working as a team of people to go out and talk about what we are required to do and how our offices function.

**Joan Kester:** Let me just say that what we thought that was really important was that we were out in the local areas finding out what people felt were the primary issues, the barriers that they experienced in working collaboratively as a community in the area of transition. I'm sure that when I go over this list, you may find that your states have very

similar issues. This really is the foundation for how we try to address issues. They talked a lot about communication breakdowns. There still continues to be a lot of turf issues that are almost always centered around money. There was a lot of staff turnover, especially in some of the county mental health/mental retardation agencies. We all had different priorities. People don't always take the time to learn about different systems and their languages. There was a lack of relationships and a big lack was respect. Then they really told us that they didn't get that many opportunities to network.

As the Training Committee we, for some reason, just clicked. I think part of it was that we tried to make it fun. We have a lot of folks who are very passionate about what we are doing and pretty connected to the field over the years. Now that we really have this foundation, we look at as the building blocks. They are all built upon really respecting one another and respecting the fact that if I'm Vocational Rehabilitation, my priority may be very different than what it would be in another system. What we found is that if you value one another's perspectives, you can create strategies or activities or projects that deal with the bigger picture. We feel that has led us to a shared vision - we always keep the eye on outcomes for students. Everything we do is based upon that. We have some guiding principles that are tools or ways of trying to do business - things that we say we are committed to doing. We really try to deal with issues - "Welcome to my world" we call it. It is gaining that perspective of other people's agencies. After I've worked in the field of Vocational Rehabilitation for quite a few years - in transition specifically for four years at the state level - I find that I still learn about other agencies at every meeting that we have. You have to accept the fact that it is going to be an ongoing learning process. We have been able to find that we do have common goals even though we may have different priorities, but that we have to get things done as a team. That means we have to do a lot of networking and communication and constantly revisit our relationships and validate that we really do value the opinions of stakeholders. One of the areas that we have tried to include from the very start is keeping the parent's perspective is one of the most important perspectives that we need to include in planning anything in transition. What we have done as we have tried to develop this practice of community is that anytime we do training or technical assistance, we do it to a shared audience and I think that is what makes us unique. Kerin is going to talk about how we function as a committee.

**Kerin Kohler:** We found that what really works for our community is that we operate by a committee. We communicate fairly regularly together. We use email, a listserv, phone conferences, and even though we come from different parts of a very large state, we do have a good amount of face-to-face meetings. We also operate under the concept of oneness across the various resources. We are all very committed to being on top of what is going on in our individual fields and then sharing that information and involving the other systems in any effort to do that. We also recognize that it has to be a constant growing process. We are always asking ourselves "Who is missing from the table?" That can be from one meeting to the next, one year to the next, one project to the next. We are always looking at what we could do as a community to better serve the joint population that we work with. We are goal oriented. I think Ellen had said earlier we have projects that we work on in a collaborative manner and we are committed to following through

with those projects. We also have adopted a process of developing a training agenda - that really kind of took form in the fall of 2001.

**Ellen Romett:** I wanted to say that if anyone has any questions, just jump in. It is probably better if we just have this work like a conversation. When Kerin was talking about this goal of always looking to where we can grow and how we can leverage what we are doing, one of the things that we found with the original group that was involved with the Memorandum of Understanding was that Juvenile Justice was noticeably absent from the table. I think that we all know and we would agree nationally that far too many of our kids are involved with the Juvenile Justice system. We have brought Juvenile Justice to the table - especially when we do training and conferences. They are not formally part of our legal Memorandum of Understanding but we certainly need to be at the table with them. The other players I think that we felt that we really need to formally connect with are our colleagues at the Parent Information and Training Center. We always bring not only individual parents but parents who would represent a network of advocacy or training experts. We work hard to make sure that parents are always a part of everything - not just developing a training agenda, but are there in kind of the nitty-gritty such as - what's our direction?, What are our policies?, What are our operating goals and standards? and so on. You know to try to bring parents in as equal partners on this.

**Sylvia:** I just wanted to add something. This is really positive for families from Pennsylvania. I am a parent of a child with a disability and I was a part of the MOU process when it first began. I just wanted to reiterate what Ellen was saying. Basically, parents were a part of that process from the very beginning.

**Ellen Romett:** Thanks, Sylvia. The other thing - and this is something that Joanne Cashman from NASDSE kind of taught me. I can say that I am a slow learner because the first couple meetings I wasn't real sure why we were doing the things we were doing, but Joanne would bring some of the folks from Pennsylvania down to Washington for various meetings. I kept thinking, "What are we doing here? I mean I don't understand this, like principles of association, etc." It finally clicked that you know a lot of people so we all can leverage. There are lots of people who touch kids who are going to be exiting schools. We need to be constantly thinking about whom we are handing these students off to or how we are going to expect them to function. Another noticeable missing partner is the business community. We are now really focusing on connecting with our chambers of commerce and our business communities because we know we need to get connected to the business community and bring them to the table. We've had a couple of projects and I think that has been very, very important in holding that training team together. Basically, after we went out and talked about what this MOU said, we could have disbanded and felt comfortable about completing what we should have completed, but we didn't. We said, "Okay, let's really now try to work this thing." Some folks from Pennsylvania went to the National Disability Mentoring Day in the Fall of 2001. When they were down there, I guess Polly Campost and Joanne Cashman gave them a challenge - to go back to Pennsylvania and try to build something like they experienced in Washington. I was saying yesterday when we had a meeting with our community in Harrisburg, "You know, nothing is ever really clean." Because one of the guys that went

down to Washington with students just happened to be the husband of our State Director of Special Education. His wife and our State Director of Special Education were college roommates. So, there was a natural connection there. There is always a connection someplace. This guy came back and said, "They are doing really great things, Fran," and "We need to be doing some stuff in Pennsylvania." So, Fran Warmkowski, who was our Bureau Director before she just recently stepped down, contacted me and said, "I'd like to see us take on the transition initiative." She called me to Harrisburg in January and gave us the challenge to do a transition conference. What I did was talk to my friends on this Community of Practice, this MOU team. We call ourselves the IDEA Interagency MOU Team. I contacted them and said, "Fran wants us to have a transition conference." Historically, that would have been something that would have been an Education only kind of conference. I thought, no, "We can't be Education only because what is the requirement here? The requirement from a regulatory standpoint is that Education agencies work to connect families and students to their post-school outcomes and to the agencies and services that are going to assist them in achieving that post-school outcomes. So you can't do it alone as an Education agency. You've got to be detectives." Well, at our first conference we had over a thousand people attend. We had parents; we had over two hundred and fifty agencies and staff; we had special educators; we had regular educators; we had college and university folks; we had kids, I mean - it was fabulous. We have had two disability mentoring days. All of our state agencies were involved in those mentoring days. We have had the second statewide conference and we are right now planning on our third statewide conference. We have also benefited in that each of our offices have gone out and networked in their own way. Kerin is going to talk with you about that.

**Kerin Kohler:** I am from the Department of Public Welfare and we have four occupants within the Department of Public Welfare that are members of the MOU Committee. One of those is the Office of Mental Health Assessment Research. Our Governor has recently formed a Governor's group related to children and families. It is housed at the office of Mental Health Assessment Research. This group is a Community of Practice in itself. It includes secretaries for each MOU partners along with other officials as well as Research and Assessment. Each Cabinet has been established to coordinate and streamline services for children and families among the different governmental agencies. This Cabinet has been charged with developing recommendations that are going to identify barriers that prevent effective admission services for children and their families who are in need. And then we will form around needs and discuss solutions that will affect the problems. We already know that our team is going to be linking with the Children's Cabinet. We are hoping that we can help to form that Cabinet and help determine where there focus should be. Also, the Mental Health Assessment Community Services has several things that are a pilot project. That started in January 2002. We kind of took the whole Community of Practice philosophy although we weren't calling it that back then. We played with developing the pilot project. A concept paper was written for the pilot and developed by classes and groups that has representatives from office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Vocational Rehab, Mental Retardation, Children, Youth and Families Planning Council, and PaTTAN. It included consumers and it included family members. And then this group scored the papers that were submitted and

recommended to us actions and procedures and awards. There were also piloting tests that were implemented by the State. Another one of the offices in the Department of Public Welfare is the Office of Mental Retardation. The Office of Mental Retardation is sponsoring three transition pilots as well. There is one that is in the Lehigh Valley Area. Another one that is in coalition building around transition and employment specific, and that is in two counties that are pretty rural in central parts of the state. Then there are some other counties MH/MR programs participating in local transition community practices statewide. The Office of Children and Families are promoting secondary transition in a variety of ways. Since I have been active in the area, which has been since the summer of 2002, I have started including updates in our Child Welfare Updates, a quarterly newsletter. The updates include three outcome areas that we need to look at federally - safety, programming and the well being of children. Our newsletters are geared towards one of those outcomes. It would be better to have articles regarding transition and the transition teams than direct the articles either in the programming area, well being area, or the safety area. The nice thing is that Joan and Ellen have actually co-written a couple of the articles for those child welfare updates. The newsletters are sent to all of our public and private child welfare agencies in Pennsylvania. They all have Joan and Ellen's contact information and will get the Transition team's training agenda.

**Question:** Is that something available outside of Pennsylvania?

**Kerin Kohler:** We had copies available at the NASDSE conference in November. We currently don't have the website that that office is operating. We intend to do that in the future. I can give you our website.

**Carol Daniels:** If you forward that to me, we can post it on the TA communities website – [www.tacomunities.org](http://www.tacomunities.org). In the meantime, check out the PaTTAN website – [www.pattan.k12.pa.us](http://www.pattan.k12.pa.us).

**Dawn Romesk:** Joan, I know that we are going to go into some transition projects from OBR, but I wanted to note that one of the things that we did for the first of our transition conferences to entice people to attend by offering mini grants to teams of folks that attended. We put the burden on participants by saying that they needed to attend our conference as a team. A team was comprised of a school administrator, a school instructional staff member, an agency representative who worked with the school, and a parent. At that first conference we identified thirty-one different programs in the State that we felt had modeled exemplary practices related to transition. Those practices were around the areas of self-advocacy where the schools that may have developed and implemented course work and actually had courses as part of their general curriculum.

**Kerin Kohler:** My responsibility in my office is policy. I have been charged with writing new chapters of regulations. Through my involvement with the Transition Community, I am actually able to put common language in child welfare regulations and have added a lot of requirements to collaborate with other systems. The changes came not just in this setting. The teachers now know that it is their responsibility to make sure that they are

networking with all systems and it is the responsibility of all the systems to collaborate. We are trying to incorporate that into Child Welfare communities as well. Another thing that we are working on from the Department of Public Welfare is developing practice standards for independent living services for adolescents who are in placement. We are also dealing with promising child welfare practice standards. However, we've seen that we were really missing that whole independent living area as it is related to adolescents. Through my relationship with people from the Transition initiative, we've actually pulled a lot of people from transition teams and different agencies to actually help us to develop those standards. It is a process of development of standards and I connect to Child Welfare. We are also bringing classes on transition to different audiences. Our state hosts an Adopt Conference every year. This year the Community of Practice in Transition has been asked to speak to the Child Welfare audience. We also have some local collaborative efforts from our state level down to the local levels that are going to be presenting as well. The representative from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and I are going to jointly be presenting this message - addressing the timely enrollment of foster children into schools, referring to parents and the IEP process. We are hoping that a lot of the sessions presented at the Adoption Conference are also going to be able to be presented at our Transition Conference. That would be getting to another audience. They will all be getting the same information. We have also found we have been able to collaborate on some child specific cases. Normally I don't have child specific cases cross my desk but if we happen to see that particular question and can act upon it. As we were sitting here one day for lunch, I actually started asking questions relative to this meeting. It is something that will help people at the local level solve. We found that there are a lot of quality gaps at both Education and Child Welfare.. We are going to be sitting down to look at the assessments and outlining them and then taking them higher up and go to some departments. I hope that we will be able to issue some joint policies to resolve some of these issues. I think Joan is now going to talk about some of the other issues with the Transition Project.

**Joan Kester:** I think that one thing that I am hoping you are hearing is that we all try to not only work as a community within as a unit or a team but we also go out and work in each other's systems to provide support and to provide even greater connections. The connections go in many ways. I think that is one thing from being outside the Education system that I find really critical is that we are not only going into the education world but we are also trying to go out and make a difference and change our system so that we all function as a stronger community working toward the outcomes they use. As I mentioned earlier, our Director, Steve Massuti, is very supportive of transition achievement as a priority. Because we have had some major turnover in our agency due to retirements, we had some dollars available - close to four million dollars available - to really almost do some demonstration projects for expansion projects. Of course we were advocating for that to be used for some transition initiatives. Sometimes in order to really get programs up and running, as with those mini grants, people need seed money to get them started. What is really exciting is that we have developed project concepts for the 21 offices across the State that work in partnerships with other agencies and educational entities and parents to develop projects in their local communities. What we have done at the State level, and Ellen has been instrumental in this, is we have developed what is called a

Financial Memorandum of Understanding, which is different from the Memorandum of Understanding that we have been talking about. Historically there have been some of these Financial Memorandums of Understanding that allow for easier flow of dollars out to local levels for projects if that is the specific area is really interested in developing. We have developed a financial agreement with Education and through the PaTTAN system, there are going to be fiscal agents for these forty local projects. What is really exciting to me in terms of systems change - which I feel is really what is one of my primary responsibilities - is that there are over 28 types of partnerships in some of the projects that fall from the states. So not only do we have other public agencies, but we have private agencies, we have community rehab providers, and we have work force development systems. We are working with the community in economic development, chambers of commerce, and career and technical education entities in order to accomplish our goals. Just to give you a glimpse of what we are doing, we found that the project fell into several major categories. We have projects that deal with outreach to underserved populations. For our program we do serve students that are served under section 504 and under rehab acts. We find that we have problems connecting with kids in those programs. We have several programs in that area. One of the very interesting ones in the north central part of the state is for incarcerated youth. Through the community, they have developed a Transition Council inside of a prison. We are able to invest some dollars to develop a high tech training program for youth and support some of the team activities that will lead kids to success educationally and vocationally. The area of assessment has been a big issue in Pennsylvania so we are really working on several very interesting vocational assessment projects. In the Pittsburgh area, there is a project team that is developing an education and vocational rehab workgroup looking at the duplication of effort when you make a referral and how we seem to keep reinventing the wheel. What they are doing is developing a strategy for what information could be collected by Education that would be acceptable to have students referred to the CR agency, accepted or determined eligible and to help with the planning. They are working on building a bridging tool between the IEP and the individualized plan for employment, so we are excited about that. We have projects for mentoring and job shadowing, or taking the model that we used at the state level and doing that at the local level. We are trying to expand the projects with post-secondary education and training. We have seen through the research that if you get the opportunity prior to making that decision to go to college - for instance, if you go for a week or so to a university, picture college life and to learn about study skills and the social life - students are much more successful when they go to school. We are setting up about four of five of those programs with some of the institutions of higher education, four-year universities and community colleges. Finally, the largest area for us is our primary mission - employment. We are setting up programs. Most of these are school-based programs to create more community-based work assessment and work experience programs. We have some projects that deal with self-determination skills of youth, and summer employment programs. Last but not least, we have been able - and very fortunate - to be able to set money aside to support our Community of Practice at the state and the local levels. In the fall we had our first session for promoting local Transition and Coordinating councils for teens. We are in the process with our inner-agency team at the state level to see what is it that people want or need at the local level in order to really work with that community and make a difference for

youth. Not only is special education putting up dollars at the State level but we are also able to put up dollars to help with some local projects. We will require that they be twelve system projects that are focused on outcomes for youth. I think that that in a nutshell is what Vocational Rehabilitation has been doing in the area of transition. We are really excited about it and are hoping that the projects get up and running within the next month or so.

**Ellen Romett:** One of the things that I want to try to reinforce or reiterate is this idea of always doing training where we invite everybody - all of the agencies involved at the state and local level. As I said we began, I work at PaTTAN, the Department of Education's professional developments arm. We do all of the training and technical assistance for the Bureau of Special Education statewide for any folks who are serving students with disabilities in schools. Traditionally our trainings have been PaTTAN developed and delivered training that reached out to education with the transition issue. About three years ago, we changed that. We said that not only are we working with this inner-agency group of folks but we want to actualize that collaboration in our training. When we do training, we usually develop that training by having the involvement by the IDEA MOU team of folks and, of course, our PaTTAN consultants in the area of transition. More importantly, we make sure that the training announcements get out to anybody who touches any of those agencies as far as providing services for children and youth or MR or drug and alcohol. We make sure that we get out that training announcement to all of those folks. When we do training now, we don't have an audience that consists mostly of teachers but we can have caseworkers, social workers, drug and alcohol folks, rehab counselors as well as teachers. It really is a mixed group of people. We have gone as far to change our online registration structure so we now include agency direct service staff and agency administrative staff on our regular courseware framework. We have made a major commitment to assuring that we have a system that welcomes and makes equal anybody from any system. We truly want that inner-agency perspective. We really want to be part of that. It is not easy. It is easier for everyone to protect their own turf or to stay within their own silo. Because this hasn't been a bed of roses, we all scratch our heads and say, "Where is she coming from or where is he coming from? What do you mean by that?" You just step back and say, "Wait a minute. Now I understand why the system operates this way." Everybody doesn't get into a room and kiss and hug and everything is rosy all of the time. We definitely talk things out in accordance with regulations. It really has enhanced services for students. It is so much easier when you know somebody in another agency to get some nagging student placements worked out.

**Question:** You were talking about correctional systems that you are working with. How do you get referrals from correctional systems? Do you have the counselors who are stationed in the correctional system in some way, or, how do you do that?

**Ellen Romett:** We have had a person in the Department of Education from the Juvenile Education Correctional program to work with students who are of school age in correctional facilities. We are required to provide their educational program and we actually have a person in the Bureau of Special Education who is responsible for

coordinating all of those services. School districts that have county prisons within their school district are responsible for providing the educational programs so we have those kids who fall in as part of our child count.

**Joan Kester:** From a vocational rehab standpoint, I say is an area that we need to develop. Voc Rehab doesn't have enough counselors to get in every area that we need to. We are trying to do this though the development of these local teams. Some of the teams' Transition Councils have been operational for over ten years and they include folks from that system. We are really excited to promote things like whole system assessment and the formal referral process so that kids are connected with the agencies that they need to be. We are probably doing it from more of a systems standpoint than having a counselor assigned to each facility.

**Ellen Romett:** We actually have educational initiatives. We have a project called Project Able that functions within the county and state prisons to work with students who are students with disabilities within those systems.

**Question:** Are you referring to the special ed kids with an IEP or a 504?

**Ellen Romett:** They may be either.

**Question:** How do you categorize them?

**Ellen Romett:** It depends. They are individually identified. They may be identified as a student with a disability but the prison wouldn't generate how they are categorized. They could come into the correctional system as having been identified before. They don't just automatically become a student with a disability because they are in a correctional facility. They can retain their general ed status or their status as a protected student with a disability student or 504. When talking to a man on the Special Ed Advisory Panel who works at this facility out in the western part of the state, we talked about a lot about some of the barriers to linking kids. One thing that we really haven't figured out how to do a better job at is if a child is at a correctional facility but lives at the other end of the state, making a referral for our agency can be tough because a counselor from that particular area going to a prison and then transferring that case back to another county.

**Response:** Those are problems that I have observed. That is why I am curious.

**Ellen Romett:** We have talked about people getting lost through the cracks. We have some funds to determine how to keep better track. We don't know what we are calling it but it would really be almost a database where information would be shared and then much more easily passed from one agency to another.

**Question:** Like a shared data system?

**Ellen Romett:** Yes. That is one of our visions that we would like to look at.

**Question:** One more question related to this is - do you have any cooperation with the One Stop and their Youth Services and serving them as disadvantaged youth in the corrections systems.

**Joan Kester:** We have a partner with the Bureau of Workforce Investment that is the Youth Services in our One Stop that is called Career Links. They are also part of our team. What we have been pleased with is historically we haven't been able to really to see data about youth with disabilities who are served, but more recently they are looking at that as a key issue. I think that about 26% of all youth that they serve in their system are youth with disabilities.

**Carol Daniels:** I am afraid that I am going to stop it right there because we are running out of time. I want to say a really big thank you to Ellen Romett, Joan Kester, and Kerin Kohler for participating on this conference call. I am sure that there are a lot of people on the line who still have questions. My suggestion is that if you still have questions for any of the three presenters that perhaps using the Exiting Community of Practice listserv to ask the questions and then we will get the answers out to everybody on the listserv. That way everyone can benefit from the interactions. We want to thank everyone who participated.

I also wanted to share information on one more conference call that is coming up that may be of interest to people who are on the line. The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition is sponsoring a conference call on Increasing Rates of School Completion: Moving from Policy and Research to Practice on Tuesday, January 27, 2004 from 2 –3 Central Time (10 a.m. Hawaii, 12 p.m. Pacific; 1:00 Mountain, 3 p.m. Eastern). The presenters are Dr. Camilla Lehr, Research Associate at the institute on Community Integration at the University of Minnesota and Dr. Sandra Christenson, Professor, educational Psychology, at the University of Minnesota. To participate in the call, dial 703-736-7227 a couple of minutes before the call begins and refer to the "NCSET Teleconference Call) if asked by the operator. During the call, if using a speaker phone, please press the mute button when listening. The only cost to you is the long distance fee to the 703 area code. You do not need to RSVP to participate on this call.

Carol Daniels: Thanks again to everyone who participated on this call. Thanks again to Ellen, Joan, and Kerin. We really appreciate everything that you are doing and please keep us updated.

**Deb:** I would just like to quickly congratulate Pennsylvania. They truly have rewired the brain at the community level in making connections. They moved it down to the community level where the people are now looking more closely at those connections.